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ABSTRACT

The geographic area served included five counties in northeastern Oklahoma. Needs and interests of students enrolled in adult basic education courses were assessed by questionnaire. Counselor interviews with interested students followed, which focused on job requirements and qualifications, preparations, and training. Guest lecturers--vocational-technical personnel, business leaders, and community action representatives--also participated. A follow-up evaluation instrument was sent to determine student progress in seeking further training or employment. (The follow-up procedure is detailed in the report, and the results of the survey are analyzed.) The results indicated that 59% had taken the first step in pursuing career development, the major goal of the report. Among the conclusions were the findings that most students had no concept of the occupational and training opportunities available. It was also found that students adopted a more realistic approach to seeking short term goals when knowledge of job qualifications was acquired. Both the initial needs assessment and evaluation questionnaire are included. (WL)

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# A SPECIAL PROJECT DESIGNED TO OFFER OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION TO ADULTS IN ABE CLASSES AND TO RESEARCH THE PERFORMANCES OF THOSE ADULTS WHO TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER TRAINING

A REPORT

PRESENTED BY

PRYOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PRYOR, OKLAHOMA

APPROVED BY

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ADULT EDUCATION SECTION

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73105

SEPTEMBER, 1974

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ABSTRACT*

In an attempt to improve the effectiveness of Adult Basic Education this project was undertaken to add another dimension to the program. By adding occupational information and information concerning the availability of occupational training it is hoped that the adult student will be better able to deal more effectively with the demands of a changing society.

Data were collected from questionnaires sent to the Adult Basic Education enrollees of the current basic education classes and from personal interviews of these returning questionnaires.

An increase in living standards and the raising of one's self esteem is a composite of several factors interacting to make the adult successful or unsuccessful in dealing with every day activities. Future research will be needed to identify with some accuracy the elements of career training which will have the greatest influence on the lives of the Adult Basic Education student.

*Approved by State Department of Education, Adult Education Division for support under Adult Education Act of 1966 P.L.89-750.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Developing an effective Adult Basic Education Program that reaches and best serves the adult who can make the most use of it, is a goal of everyone connected with Adult Basic Education. During the last few years those connected with the adult program have become aware that if the program is to meet its highest responsibility it must provide information about occupations and sources of occupational training to the Basic Education students.

This special project then, was undertaken to improve methods of providing occupational information to eligible adult trainees and to research the effectiveness of the project through a follow-up study.

The objectives of this project are:

1. To make available occupational information to unemployed and/or underemployed adults in ABE classes in Northeastern Oklahoma.
2. To broaden the ABE student's awareness of local and state contracts available in seeking employment.
3. To increase the ABE student's understanding of training requirements and opportunities for various occupations of interest.
4. To conduct a follow-up study to determine the effectiveness of the information obtained from the project as indicated by the performance on a final evaluation instrument.
5. To determine ways in which programs of this nature could be included as a regular part of ABE.

## THE PROBLEM

It is believed that many ABE students feel as though they are at a dead end when it comes to planning for career development. It seems especially difficult for those students who are middle aged and have family responsibilities that demand so much of their time.

## JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

This program is predicated on the assumption that most of the adults in ABE classes are limited in their knowledge of employment opportunities in their area and to the requirements of certain occupations of interest. The purpose of this project is to endeavor to give the ABE student new contacts for possible employment, job requirements, and training opportunities available in Northeastern Oklahoma.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

The geographic area served included five counties in Northeastern Oklahoma consisting of Craig, Delaware, Mayes, Ottawa, and Rogers counties. These five counties have a high incidence of unemployment and people on welfare. The project will be used in some eleven different communities varying in size and industrial settings.

Much interest has been generated in recent years towards career development in grades 1 through 12. Since the ABE student has severed his ties with the public schools, his opportunities

are limited when it comes to seeking help in developing some kind of skill that will lead to economic advancement.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE PROBLEM AND ITS DESIGN

The program was designed to encourage ABE students to seek self-improvement through economic growth. By using material in the Oklahoma VIEW program[1] and the Occupational Outlook Handbook, trained counselors expanded job interest as stated by the ABE student. When sufficient interest warranted, local business leaders were used to visit the classes as guest speakers.

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The program was initiated with the help of an advisory committee composed of local leaders from industry and the professions. The committee felt that most employers wanted applicants with a basic knowledge of the skills required for their job and a person who had demonstrated the ability and willingness to be trained.

## STUDENT INTEREST QUESTIONNAIRE

Needs and interests of the ABE student were assessed by use of a questionnaire as the second step in the program. Questionnaires were made available to those students enrolled

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[1]Oklahoma VIEW Program. Prepared for counselors, teachers and administrators. Stillwater, Oklahoma: Division of Research, Planning and Evaluation, State Department of Vocational and Technical Education, 1973.

in the classes in the eleven communities. Ninety five were returned and indicated they had an interest in participating in the program.

PERSONAL INTERVIEW

The ABE counselor went to the various classes and held interviews with each of the students returning questionnaires. In the course of each interview such things as job requirements and qualifications were discussed as well as preparation and training needed. Employment demand for Northeastern Oklahoma was also pointed out to the student. This usually led to a discussion on where the student could obtain training for his or her particular job interest.

GUEST LECTURERS

Guest speakers were invited to attend classes in five of the eleven communities. They consisted of Vo-Tech personnel, and business leaders and community action representatives in the five county area. By far, the greatest interest seems to have been generated by the Vo-Tech speakers.

EVALUATION

Part two of the program was a follow-up study to determine the effectiveness of the information presented as viewed by the student. A final evaluation instrument was sent to the ninety five students who returned questionnaires in an attempt

to determine their progress in seeking further training or employment.

An employment card was also mailed to these ninety five students in case they were actually employed or made entrance into a training program. Analysis of this data is contained in chapter three.

The results of the evaluation instrument and performance cards will be analyzed and compared with a fcllow-up study done in 1971 with 1,699 ABE enrollees form the Pryor Center. The results from both phases of the program will be furnished the Adult Educaiton Division of the State Department of Education and any other interested persons or group.

## CHAPTER II

## ANALYSIS OF THE PROCEDURE

### FOLLOW UP

The first part of the questionnaire revealed that the average age of those responding was thirty years of age. Thirty-six were gainfully employed and fifty-nine were unemployed. The average length of employment was three years ten months. The count in areas of occupational interests with more than one request is as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Nursing | 12 | 9. Key Punch | 2 |
| 2. Secretary | 9 | 10. Computer Programming | 2 |
| 3. Bookkeeping | 7 | 11. Auto Mechanics | 2 |
| 4. Social Work | 4 | 12. College Education | 2 |
| 5. Teaching | 3 | 13. Teacher Aide | 2 |
| 6. General Office Clerk | 3 | 14. Beautician | 2 |
| 7. X-Ray Technician | 3 | 15. Personnel and Management | 2 |
| 8. Refrigeration | 3 | | |

The ABE counselor used these interests to collect pertinent information about each job from several sources. Materials that were found to be useful were as follows: (1) Oklahoma VIEW Program; (2) Occupational Outlook Handbook; and (3) college manuals. The VIEW material was used as the primary instrument in transmitting the information to the student. Thus a print out of the material covered in the counseling session could be left with each student.

The student was urged to contact the sources provided on the print outs for more information by the counselor. Invariably, one interest usually led to the observing of several other job titles.

The size of the community and the industrial setting of each class played an important part in the interests of outside speakers. This was not entirely unexpected since those communities possessing several industries offered more opportunities than those composed largely of an agricultural make up.

As previously mentioned, the area Vo-Tech speakers created the most interest among the students; possibly because they offered opportunities that best suit their career plans. In one class six students requested applications for the Vo-Tech school on the night of the speaker's visit. The Vo-Tech personnel have indicated a desire to visit the area classes next year.

An evaluation instrument was sent to each ABE student participant in the program requesting their responses on six items. The count of the completed returns and the analysis of these responses are as follows:

1. As a result of participating in the project, I am much more aware of the types and numbers of jobs available to me in my area of interest.

   Strongly agree16 Agree36 Undecided 6 Disagree___ Strongly disagree___

2. I am more aware of the training necessary for the jobs that I am interested in and where to obtain such training.

   Strongly agree21 Agree32 Undecided 4 Disagree 1 Strongly disagree___

3. This project has been very worth-while and beneficial.

   Strongly agree 38 Agree 19 Undecided 1 Disagree ___ Strongly disagree ___

4. This type of information should be a part of all Adult Education Classes.

   Strongly agree 37 Agree 21 Undecided ___ Disagree ___ Strongly disagree ___

5. I have applied for employment as a result of the information obtained from this project.

   Yes 13 No 45

6. As a result of this project, I have requested and/or obtained information for training and employment.

   Yes 34 No 24

The responses made on the fifty-eight returned evaluation forms reflect attitudes and performance of the participants. The first four statements deal with the student's feelings on the usefulness of the information gained, and the final two statements indicate how this information was used by the student.

This data can be used to make several observations. To begin with the students felt the program provided them with valuable job and training information. Secondly, 59% of the students responding have taken the initial step in pursuing career development which was one of the primary objectives of this project. Of the thirteen who applied for employment three have returned the employment cards as having been accepted.

When this data is compared with a follow-up study done in 1971 with 1,699 ABE students from the Pryor center, this program compares quite favorably. In the 1971 study 55% stated that they felt the

ABE program helped them to obtain a better job. It should be pointed out however that the 1971 study was done over a five-year period whereas this project dealt with a five-month follow-up.

## CHAPTER III

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### SUMMARY

The information gained from this project can be viewed as encouraging. The counselor-student interviews revealed several insights into the ABE student's occupational needs. Basic to the findings 4 facts emerged: (1) Of those who were employed, many felt they were in dead-end jobs. (2) Many did not realize the requirements of the jobs they were interested in. (3) Most of the students were surprised to learn that there were areas that provided both day and night training courses for adults wishing training in the development of salable skills and (4) that given the information, a high precentage of students made inquiries into career development on their own.

### CONCLUSIONS

Establishing a program that provides the ABE students with information that leads to career development creates enthusiastic responses by the students. The following conclusions further exemplified this finding.

(1) The biggest majority of the ABE students had no concept of the occupational and training opportunities available to them.

(2) Students want information about training opportunities in their immediate area.

(3) That when students learn about job qualifications, a more

realistic approach is taken to set up short range goals.

(4) The students are determined to finish the GED program, since most jobs viewed called for a high school diploma or the equivalent of a high school education.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The success of this study is not a matter of how many occupational information programs are organized using this format. Rather, how these suggestions will serve as a stimulus for others to adopt programs using their own ideas on how to meet the occupational needs of the ABE student.

For this study of offering occupational information to the ABE student to be significant, several important statements will have to be considered. Among these statements are:

(1) It is recommended that additional counseling be made available to carry out the program.

(2) It is recommended that occupational counseling be made a part of the instruction for each ABE class.

(3) It is recommended that local business and professional personnel be enlisted to provide occupational and training opportunities in the local area.

(4) It is recommended that funds be provided to employ a trained counselor to serve each learning center.

# APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME Mr. / Mrs. / Miss _____ AGE _____

ADDRESS _____

1. Are you at present gainfully employed? _____

2. If yes, how long? _____

3. Would you like to know about availability of jobs in Northeastern Oklahoma? _____

4. Would you like to know about available training in Northeastern Oklahoma? _____

5. Please list in order of preference three areas of jobs that you would like to know about.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____ _____

Date Signature

Member of North Central Association

Pryor City Schools
Pryor, Oklahoma 74361

Dewey Talley — Director of Adult Learning Center

We are asking your help to give us some information that might make it possible to improve Adult Education in Northeastern Oklahoma.

Enclosed you will find an evaluation form. Would you please complete this and return it in the self addressed and stamped envelope? It is not necessary that you sign this form. We would simply like to have your opinion on these questions.

Since this project is new in the Adult Classes, we are anxious to have the replies from as many adult students as possible.

We want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for your cooperation during our past association and urge you to help us with this program.

Sincerely,

Dewey Talley

Dewey Talley, Director
Adult Education Center
Pryor, Oklahoma

DT:bmc
Encl.

EVALUATION FOR ABE SPECIAL PROJECT

1. As a result of participating in the project, I am much more aware of the types and numbers of jobs available to me in my area of interest.

   Strongly agree__Agree__Undecided__Disagree__Strongly disagree__

2. I am more aware of the training necessary for the jobs that I am interested in and where to obtain such training.

   Strongly agree__Agree__Undecided__Disagree__Strongly disagree__

3. This project has been very worthwhile and beneficial.

   Strongly agree__Agree__Undecided__Disagree__Strongly disagree__

4. This type of information should be a part of all Adult Education Classes.

   Strongly agree__Agree__Undecided__Disagree__Strongly disagree__

5. I have applied for employment as a result of the information obtained from this project._____

6. As a result of this project, I have requested and/or obtained information for training and employment._____

Member of North Central Association

Pryor City Schools
Pryor, Oklahoma 74361

Dewey Talley — Director of Adult Learning Center

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for returning the Adult Education Evaluation Survey. Your cooperation has been very helpful in improving the adult program.

In order for us to complete the project I would like to ask another favor of you. Enclosed you will find a post card to be returned to us in the event of employment or entry into a training program. Would you fill in the card with the appropriate information and return it to this office?

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dewey Talley

Dewey Talley, Director
Adult Education Center
Pryor, Oklahoma

DT:bmc

Enclosure

VIEW

JOB TITLE Clerk, General Offi.
CODE 14.0302 & 14.0329
D.O.T. 219.388.0

VITAL INFORMATION FOR EDUCATION AND WORK

**JOB DESCRIPTION:**
General Office Clerks handle correspondence, recordkeeping and other office duties in industry and business. Office Clerks make up about 15% of the total work force in the United States.

## Requirements and Qualifications

| Personal Traits | Aptitudes | Physical Abilities |
|---|---|---|
| . Pleasing personality<br>. Responsibility<br>. Cooperative<br>. Neat appearance<br>. Initiative | . To concentrate<br>. Speed and accuracy<br>. Be part of a team<br>. Spell and use English correctly<br>. Write legibly<br>. Have basic math skills | . Good general health<br>. Normal or corrected vision and hearing<br>. Full use of hands<br>. Good finger dexterity<br>. Good eye-hand coordination |

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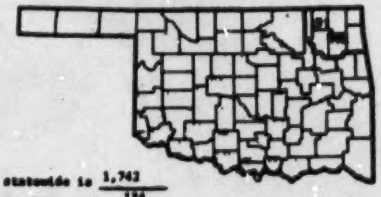
VIEW 3/1/73

## Preparation and Training Needed

. High school graduation usually required
. Helpful high school courses include English, arithmetic and typing
. A vocational business and office education course is recommended when available
. Any commercial courses would be of benefit
. On-the-job training is usually available

## Prospects and Opportunities



. Employment demand statewide is 1,743
. Employment demand in this region 134
. Employment opportunities in this occupation are fair
. Advancements in this field are fair

STATE DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA



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## Job and Salary Information

| Hours of Work | Fringe Benefits | Working Conditions |
|---|---|---|
| . 40 hours per week<br>. Overtime seldom required | (Varies with Employer)<br>. Medical and life insurance plans<br>. Paid vacation and holidays<br>. Retirement plans | . Usually modern, clean office<br>. May work sitting down for long periods of time |

| Salary (local area) | Starting Salary | Average Salary |
|---|---|---|
| | $40 per week | $84 per week |

## Sources of Training

. Tri-County AVTS #1
P.O. Box 1197
Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74003
. College High School
Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74003
. Sooner High School
Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74003
. Claremore High School
Claremore, Oklahoma 74017
. Colcord High School
Colcord Oklahoma 74338
. Grove High School
Grove, Oklahoma 74344
. Kansas High School
Kansas, Oklahoma 74347
. Miami High School
Miami, Oklahoma 74354
. Pryor High School
Pryor, Oklahoma 74361

## Sources of Information

. Victor Van Hook, State Supervisor
Business & Office Education
State Department of Vocational and Technical Education
1515 West 6th Avenue
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074

STATE DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA



VIEW

## More About the Job

. Many Office Clerks are called General Clerks since they handle miscellaneous clerical tasks
. Specific jobs under the heading of Office Clerk include Messenger, Receptionist, Mail Clerk, File Clerk, Correspondent Clerk, Bookkeeping Clerk, and General Secretary
. In most business organizations the Office Clerk may do any of the following:
  . Copies data
  . Compiles records
  . Tabulates material
  . Computes: wages, taxes, premiums, commissions, payments
  . Records orders
  . Provides information
  . Receives cash
  . Provides receipts
  . Inventories stock
  . Compiles data
  . Answers letters
  . Route materials
  . Files reports and other claims
  . Operates switchboard
  . Greets visitors
  . Operates mailing machines
  . Operates postage meters
  . Locates materials
  . Verifies information
  . Performs Notary Public duties
  . Operates duplicating equipment

## Related Occupations

. Coding clerk
. Letter of credit clerk
. Trust vault clerk
. Film rental clerk
. Chief money clerk



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